(b) whether before signing the MoU with Nigerian Government, NTPC has considered the prevailing political volatility in that country;

(c) whether executive of Indian origin working in Nigeria's delta region are being abducted by Nigerian insurgents and kept for ransom; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SHINDE): (a) NTPC Ltd. has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ministry of Energy, Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) for setting up power plants in Nigeria subject to conditions that FGN will provide, subject to availability, at least three million tonnes of Liquefied Natural Gas(LNG) per annum at reasonable price on long term basis for a period of 25 years from its existing/future LNG plants where operation is likely to begin in next 5 to 6 years. Upon successful operation of above commitment by FGN, NTPC Ltd. will set up, subject to technical feasibility, a 500 MW coal based and a 700 MW gas based power plant in Nigeria.

(b) Clearance from political angle was obtained from Ministry of External Affairs by NTPC Ltd. prior to signing of MoU.

(c) and (d) Since May, 2006, a total number of 18 Indians have been kidnapped by militants/criminal gangs in different parts of Niger delta. As soon as the Government learnt of the unfortunate incidents, immediate *demarche* was made with concerned Nigerian authorities at the highest level as well as the operative level in the concerned States. Consequently, the safe release of all Indian nationals have been secured. In order to ensure the safety of remaining Indians, suitable security advisories have been issued from time to time advising them to avoid travel to violence-prone Niger delta region and take all security measures as a matter of routine in other parts of Nigeria. The companies employing Indians have been advised to beef up security provision for the Indian nationals.

Rural electrification under Bharat Nirman Yojana

1618. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set a target of 60,000 villages to be electrified by 31st March, 2009 under the Bharat Nirman Yojana;

(b) whether the Rural Electrification Corporation, the nodal agency for its implementation, is confused with the Ministry's mixing up the target of electrifying all the villages, with the new proposal or covering all village households; and

(c) whether a demand has risen for additional allocation of Rs.24,000 crore for completion of the scheme by 2009?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SHINDE): (a) Government of India, under its Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY) Programme, launched in April, 2005 has envisaged electrification of more than one lakh un-electrified villages except remote villages covered under Ministry of New and

Renewable Energy (MNRE) Programme by 2009 besides intensive electrification of already electrified villages in the country.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir. REC has received 610 projects under RGGVY so far at the cost of Rs.30,717 crore covering 1,18,735 unelectrified villages. 235 projects were taken up for implementation in Phase-I of the scheme. The completion of projects started in Phase-I and the balance projects which are yet to be approved would be carried out once the scheme is approved for continuation in the Eleventh Plan.

Meeting the power shortage

1619. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of power shortage in the country as on date, State-wise;

(b) whether Government have sought the necessary assistance from neighbouring countries to meet the shortfall and to improve the power situation;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) by when the shortfall of power is expected to be covered?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SHINDE): (a) The State-wise details of power shortage in the country during July'07 and April-July'07 are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(a) India has agreements of co-operation with Bhutan and Nepal for exchange of power. The cooperation between India and Bhutan in the field of hydropower has been helpful in bridging the gap between demand and supply of electricity in the country. The bulk of power generated from hydroelectric projects at Tala (1020 MW), Chukha (336 MW) and Kurichhu (60 MW) in Bhutan, which have been implemented with technical and financial assistance of India, is exported to India.

The inter-border exchange of power between India and Nepal has also been taking place for mutual assistance in supplying power to border areas of the two countries under a bilateral arrangement with Nepal being net importer of power.

There is no agreement for exchange of power with any other country except Bhutan and Nepal. However, discussions have been held with the South Asian countries in the *fora* of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) covering many areas of cooperation, including power.

(d) With the measures being taken, including proposed capacity addition of 78,577 MW during the Eleventh Plan, the gap between demand and supply of power in the country as a whole is likely to be bridged by the end of Eleventh Plan.